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MAR **\$2.00**
\$2.50 in Canada

**ELFOQUEST
15
YEARS**

ELFOQUEST™

HIDDEN YEARS



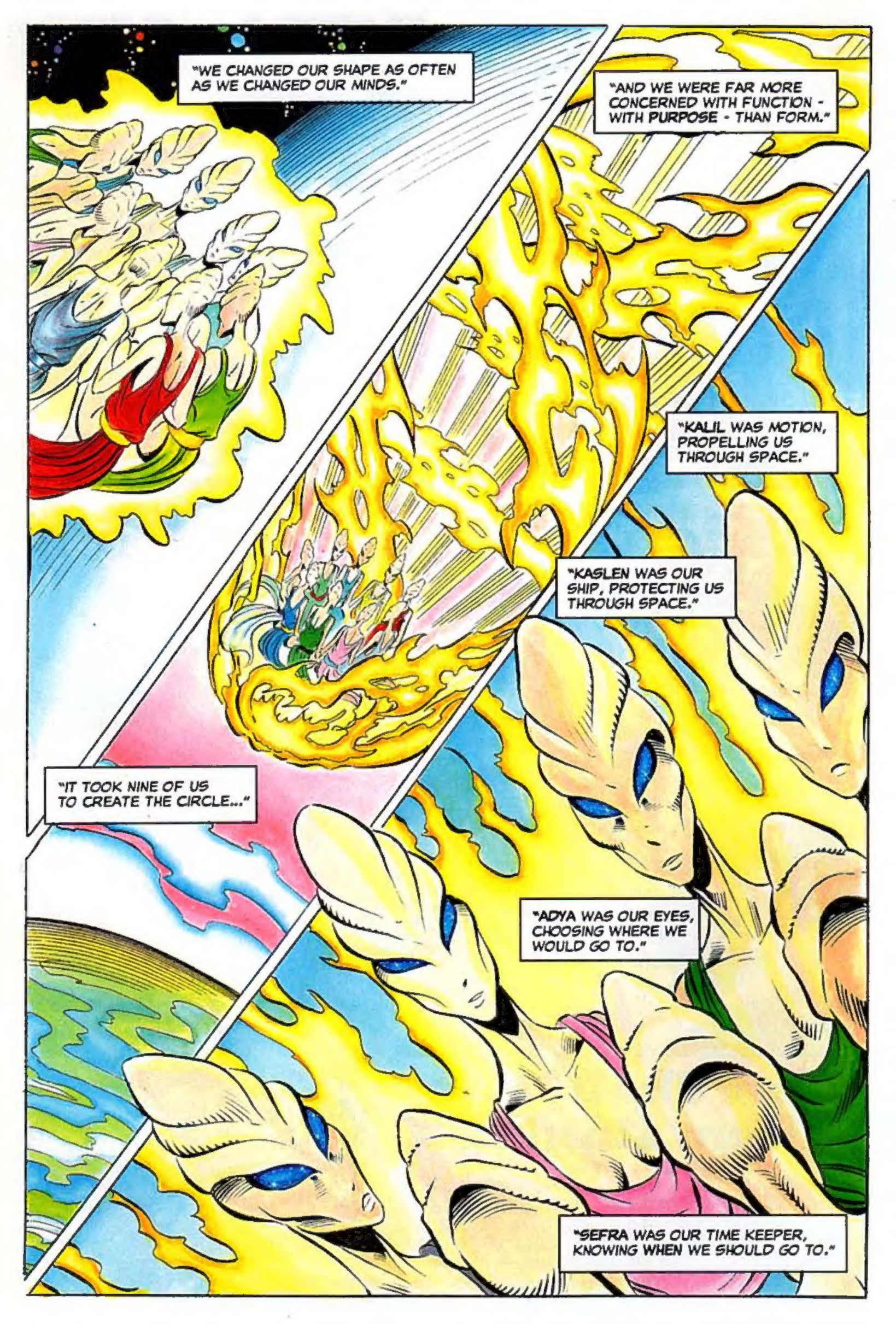
A comic book illustration featuring a group of ten alien characters in a circular dance formation. The characters are slender, with large, expressive eyes and pointed ears. They are wearing colorful, flowing dresses or capes in shades of red, blue, green, and purple. They are holding hands or reaching towards each other in a circular pattern. The background is a bright yellow, starry space with a black border containing colorful dots. In the bottom left corner, there is a stylized blue and green landscape. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, circular inset showing a close-up of a character's face.

"IN THOSE DAYS WE WERE BARELY
AGROUND, AS WE CALLED IT."

How Shall I Keep From Singing?

part 1

SARAH BYAM * SCRIPT
PAUL ABRAMS * PENCILS
CHARLES BARNETT * INKS
PATY * COLORS
WENDY PINI * STORY-ART EDITOR



"WE CHANGED OUR SHAPE AS OFTEN
AS WE CHANGED OUR MINDS."

"AND WE WERE FAR MORE
CONCERNED WITH FUNCTION -
WITH PURPOSE - THAN FORM."


"KALIL WAS MOTION,
PROPELLING US
THROUGH SPACE."

"KASLEN WAS OUR
SHIP, PROTECTING US
THROUGH SPACE."

"IT TOOK NINE OF US
TO CREATE THE CIRCLE..."

"ADYA WAS OUR EYES,
CHOOSING WHERE WE
WOULD GO TO."

"SEFRA WAS OUR TIME KEEPER,
KNOWING WHEN WE SHOULD GO TO."



"AERTH WAS OUR
EARS, KNOWING WHY
WE SHOULD GO."


"DEIR WAS OUR
BALANCE, GIVING ORDER
TO ALL OUR CHOICES."

"WE MOLDED OUR VERY
FLESH TO SERVE EACH
PURPOSE. AND AS WITH A
LONG-DISCARDED GARMENT,
IT WAS SOMETIMES HARD
TO RECALL WHICH SHAPE
WE HAD WORN..."

"...EONS BEFORE."

"HAKEN WAS OUR
PASSION, DRIVING
US FORWARD."

"GIBRA WAS OUR
CAUTION, HOLDING
US BACK."



"WE WERE PREPARED
TO CHANGE SHAPE..."

"BUT WE WERE NOT
PREPARED FOR THIS."



"...AS FIT OUR JOURNEYS."



"SEARING, WRENCHING,
UNCONTROLLABLE PAIN."



"WE ALL FELT IT. AND
PERHAPS WE NEEDED TO..."

"...FOR WE HAD FORGOTTEN
THAT WE COULD DIE."

"I AM TIMMAIN, AND IT
WAS MY PURPOSE TO
REMEMBER...EVERYTHING."

"THERE WAS SO MUCH TO REMEMBER... OF WHO WE WERE AND WHERE WE CAME FROM..."

ARE YOU SAD TO SEE IT GO?

NO, ADYA.

I CAN VISIT ANYTIME... MY SPIRIT TRAVELS AS EASILY AS YOURS.

AND WE COULD NOT STAY TO PROTECT THESE CREATURES.

YES, BUT YOU CANNOT TOUCH IT, TIMMAIN.

AND YOU DO SO LOVE TO TOUCH THINGS.

"I MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERED THAT WE ONCE TOOK MATES."

YOU ARE RIGHT, MY BOND, AS ALWAYS.

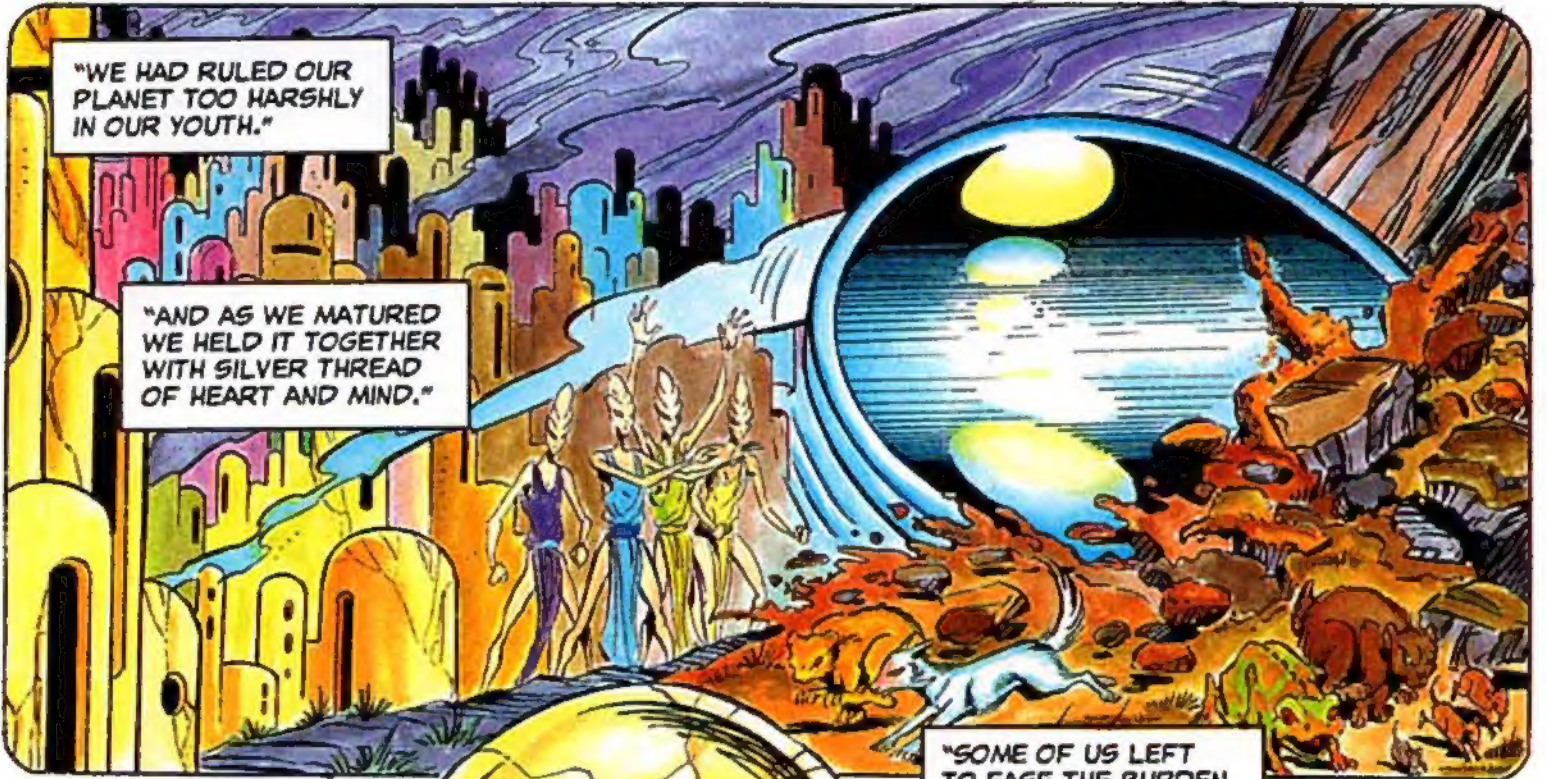
"WE HAD STOPPED JOINING MANY TURNS AGO WHEN WE CEASED TO AGE AND OUR PLANET COULD HOLD NO MORE OF US."

"THERE WAS, INSTEAD, A SOFT AND SUBTLE BOND THAT CONNECTED US WITH LOVE AND ACCEPTANCE."

"BUT IF I HAD TAKEN A MATE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ADYA."



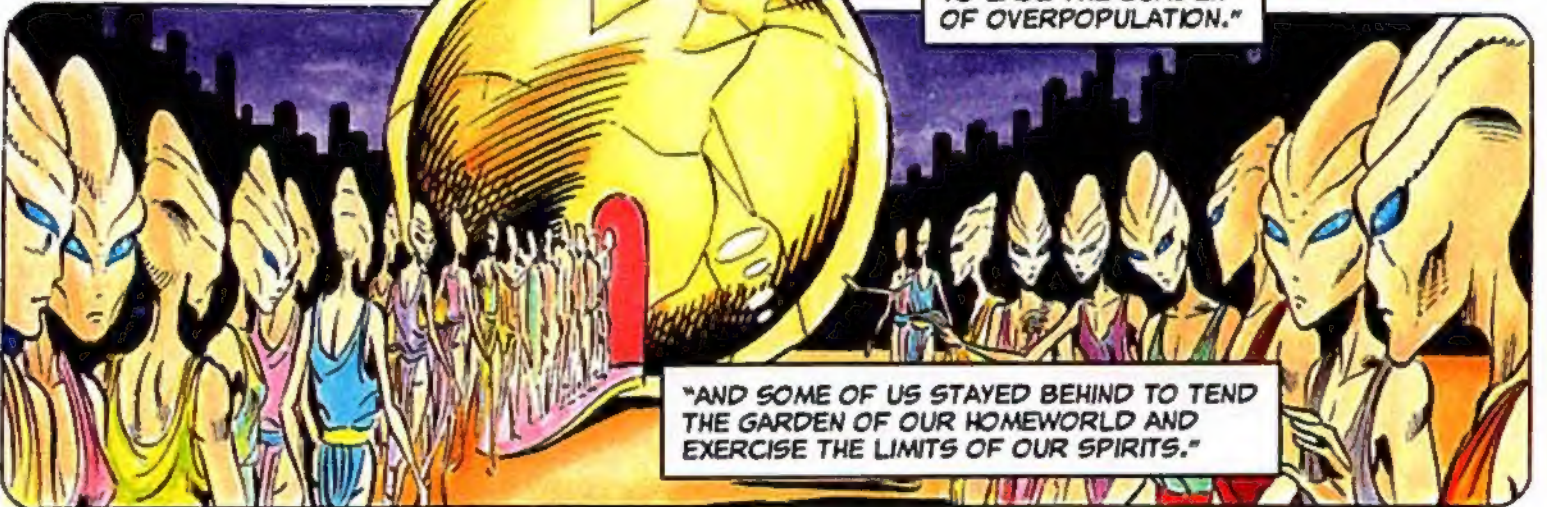
"ALWAYS SEEKING, HE WAS THE FIRST TO BRING US NEWS OF OUR LOST BROTHERS..."



"WE HAD RULED OUR PLANET TOO HARSHLY IN OUR YOUTH."

"AND AS WE MATURED WE HELD IT TOGETHER WITH SILVER THREAD OF HEART AND MIND."

"SOME OF US LEFT TO EASE THE BURDEN OF OVERPOPULATION."



"AND SOME OF US STAYED BEHIND TO TEND THE GARDEN OF OUR HOMEWORLD AND EXERCISE THE LIMITS OF OUR SPIRITS."



"UNTIL AT LAST OUR SUN WAS DYING, AND WE FOUND OURSELVES ALONE."

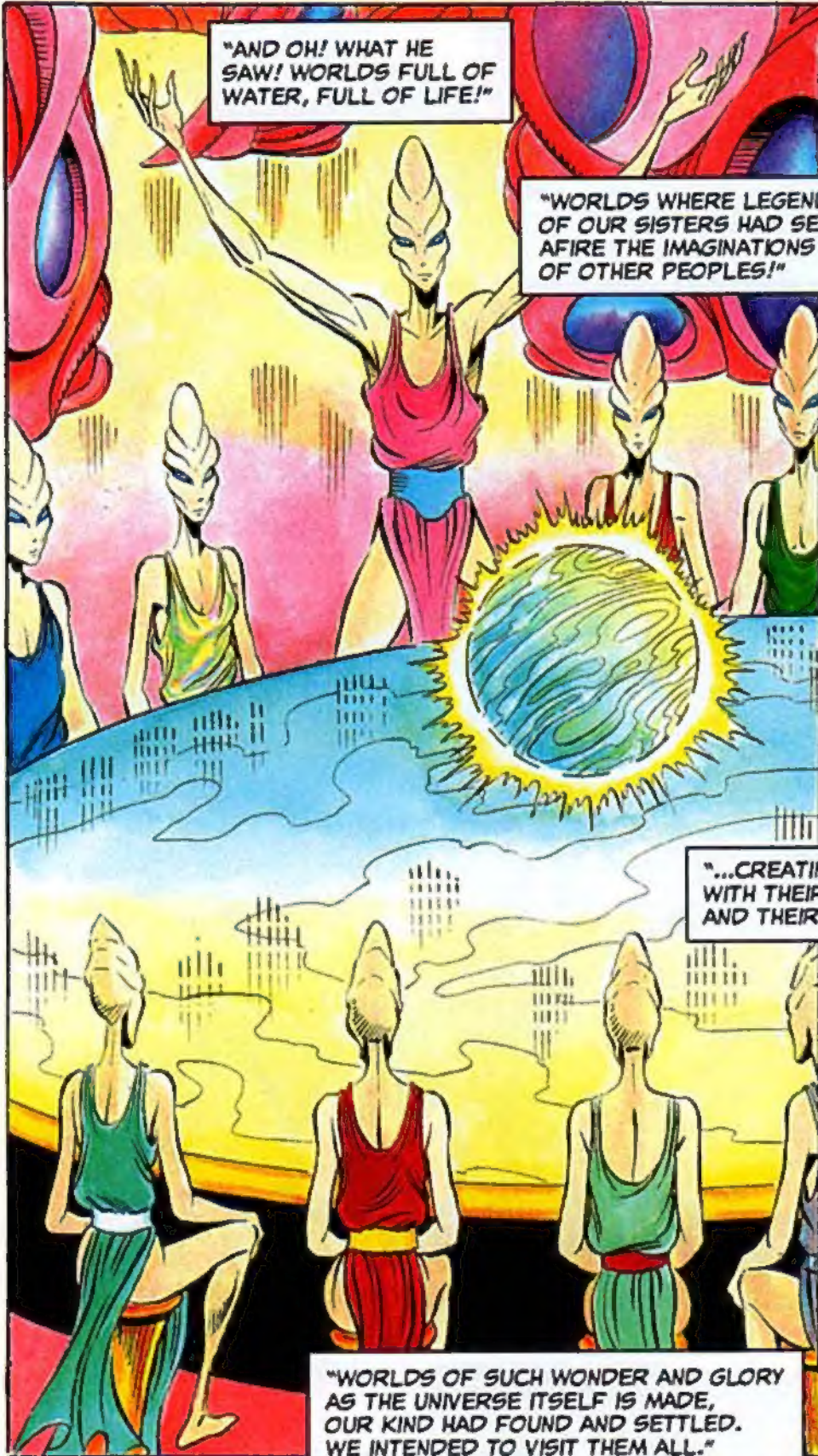
"IT WAS THEN WE GATHERED THE LAST SPECIES OF OUR DYING HOMEWORLD, AND SET OUT TO FIND THOSE WHO HAD GONE BEFORE US."



IT IS NOT SO HARD TO LEAVE.


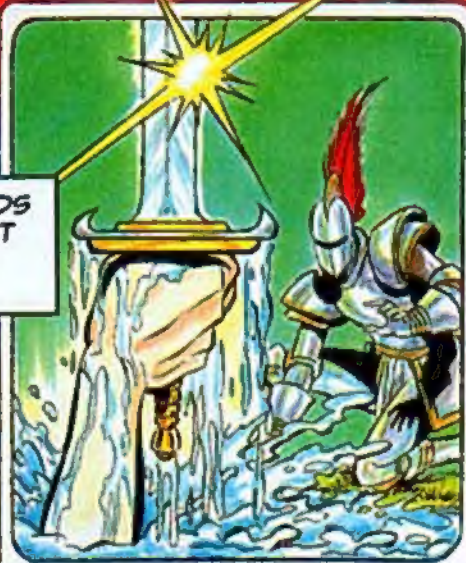
THERE WILL BE NEW GIFTS OF TOUCH... AND TASTE... AND SMELL, ADYA.

I KNOW. I'VE SEEN THEM.



"AND OH! WHAT HE
SAW! WORLDS FULL OF
WATER, FULL OF LIFE!"

"WORLDS WHERE LEGENDS
OF OUR SISTERS HAD SET
AFIRE THE IMAGINATIONS
OF OTHER PEOPLES!"




"WORLDS WHERE
OUR BROTHERS
FLOURISHED..."


"...CREATING NEW LIFE
WITH THEIR MINDS
AND THEIR HANDS!"



"WORLDS OF SUCH WONDER AND GLORY
AS THE UNIVERSE ITSELF IS MADE,
OUR KIND HAD FOUND AND SETTLED.
WE INTENDED TO VISIT THEM ALL."



"TAKING THE BURROWERS
AND THE FLITRINS WITH US WAS
AN ACT OF COMPASSION."



"IT COST US DEARLY."



"...IT WAS NO SMALL THING."



"THEY RAN FROM US."



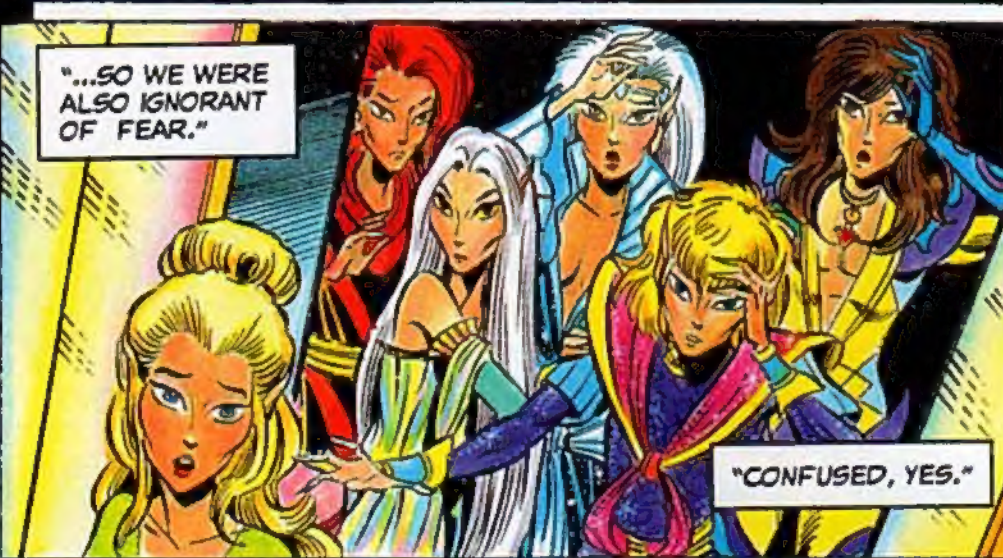
"THAT WAS THE FIRST THING WE FAILED TO UNDERSTAND. WE HAD TREATED THEM WELL, OR SO WE THOUGHT. THEY WOULD HAVE PERISHED WITH OUR WORLD, AND YET..."



"...THEY HATED US."



"...SO WE WERE ALSO IGNORANT OF FEAR."

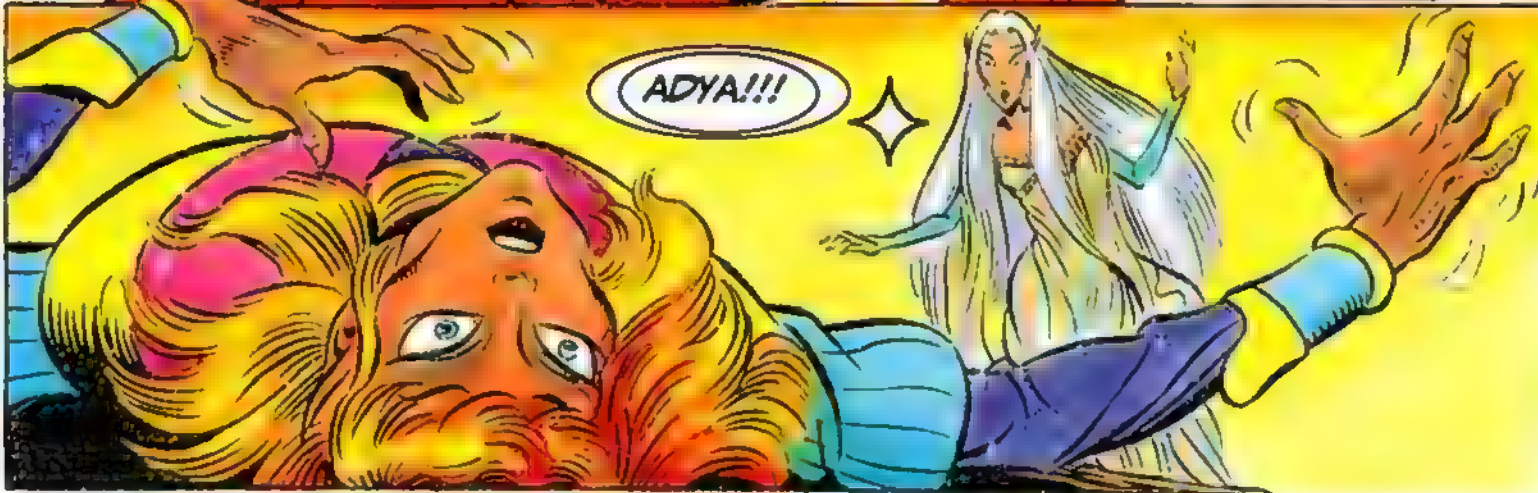
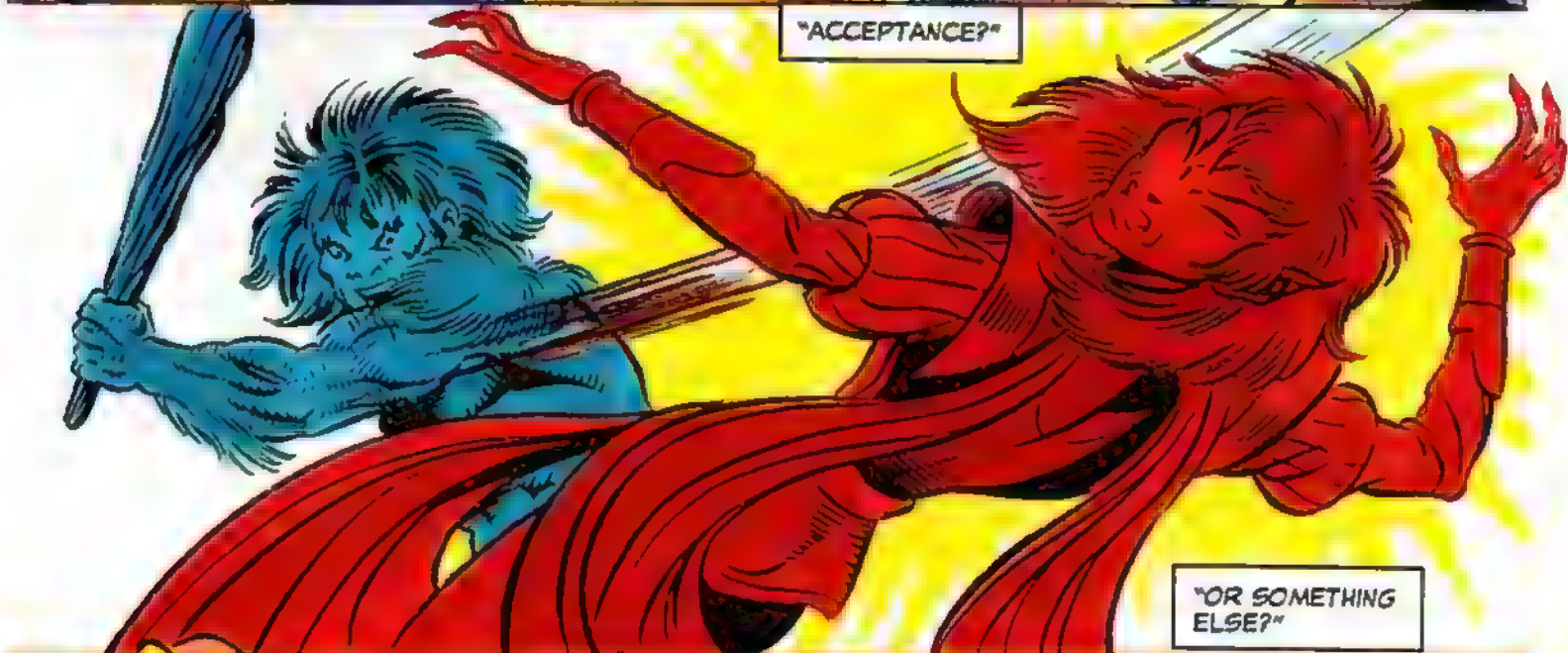
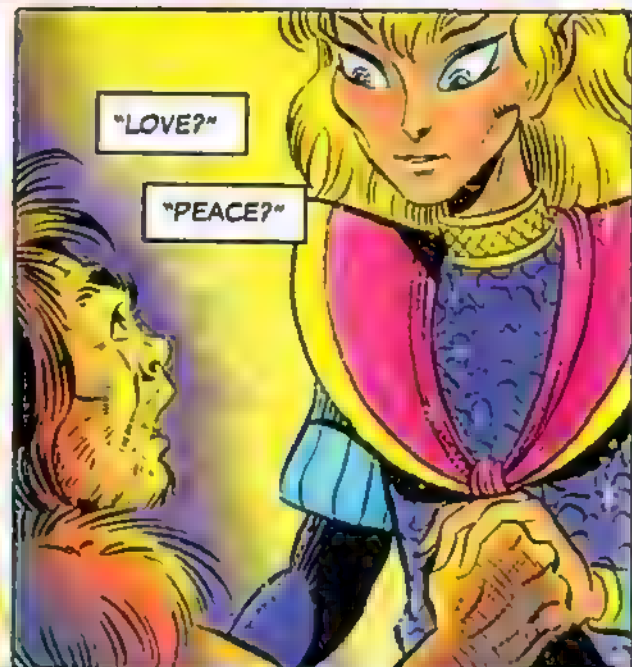
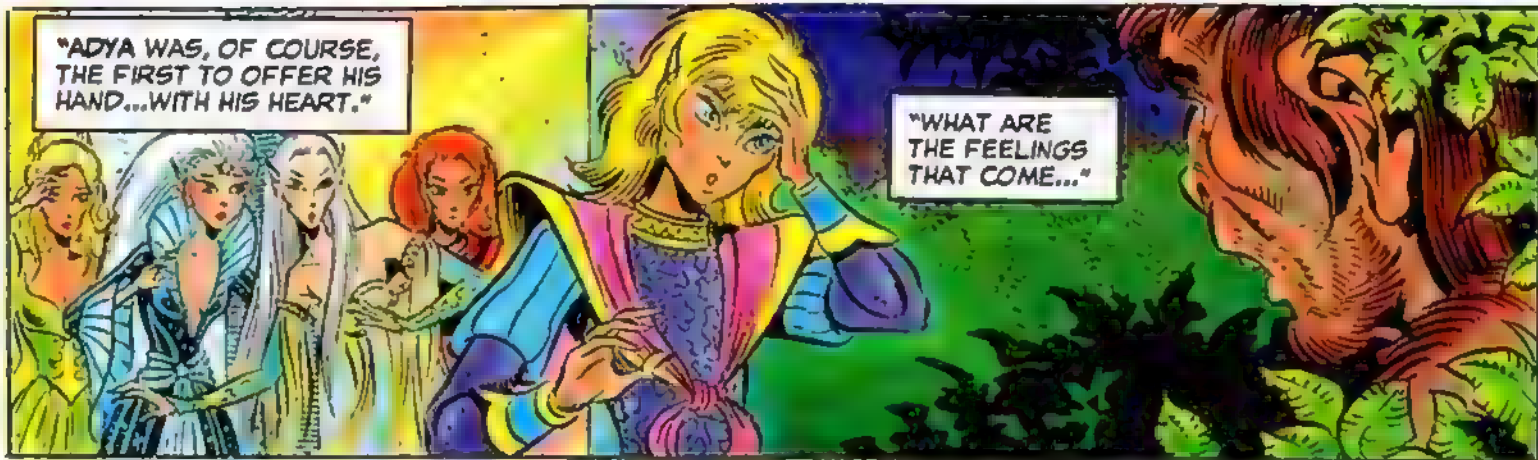


"CONFUSED, YES."

"WE WERE NOT EXPERIENCED IN HATRED..."

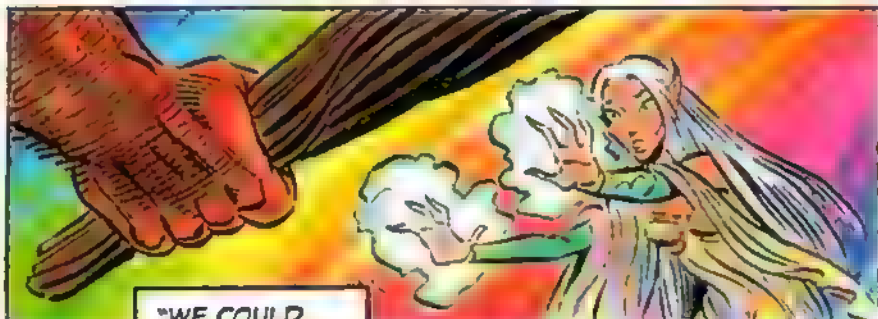
"BUT WE WERE NOT AFRAID."








"WE COULD NOT FLY..."



"WE COULD NOT SHIELD..."



"WE COULD NOT HEAL OURSELVES."



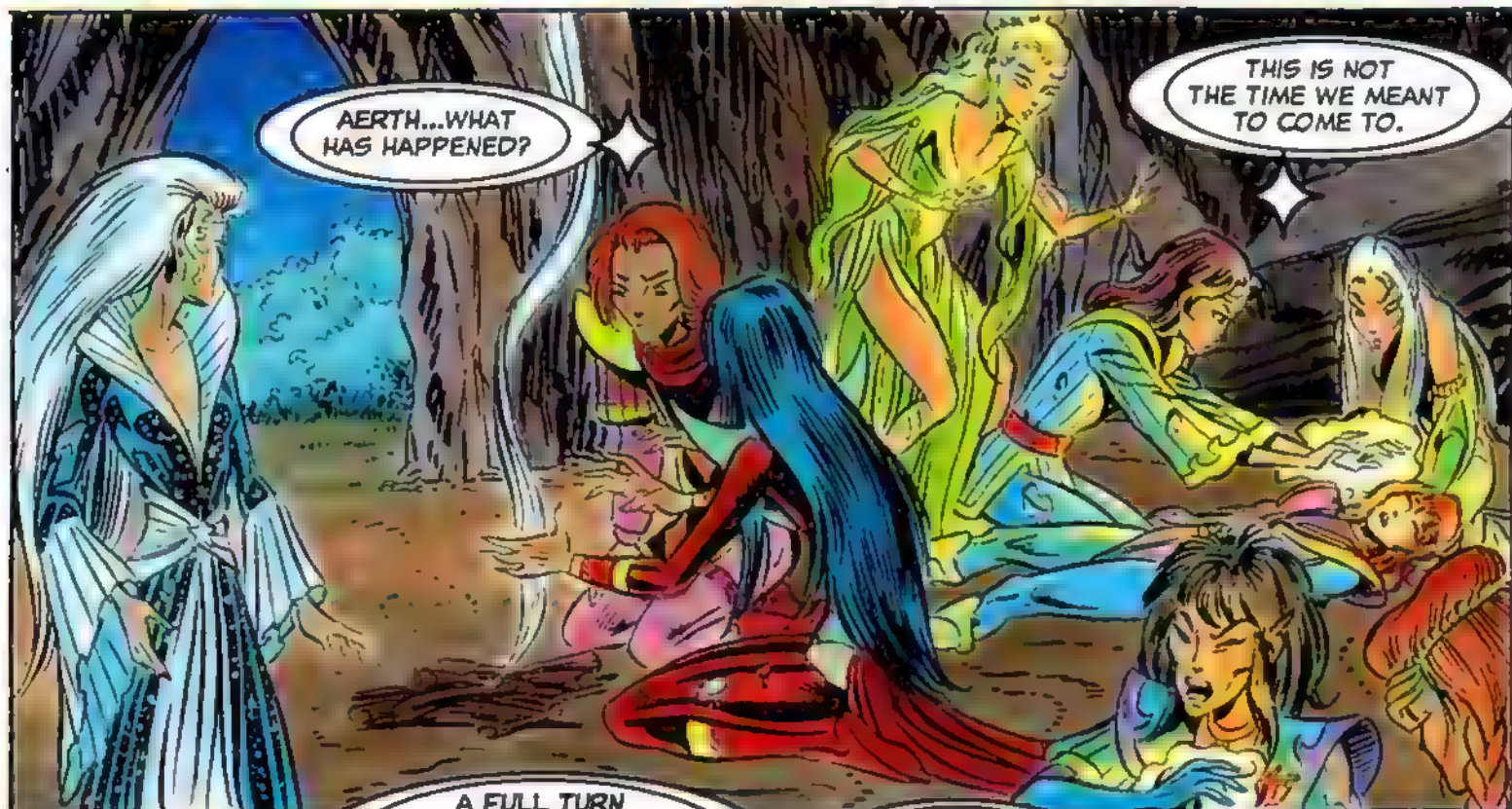
TO THE
HILLS, TOWARD THE
POLE STAR!

LEAVE HIM,
TIMMAIN.
RUN. NOW!!

"THE POWER OF THIS WORLD
WAS IN ITS CREATURES. AND
IT HAD REJECTED US AS SURELY
AS IF WE WERE A DISEASE."

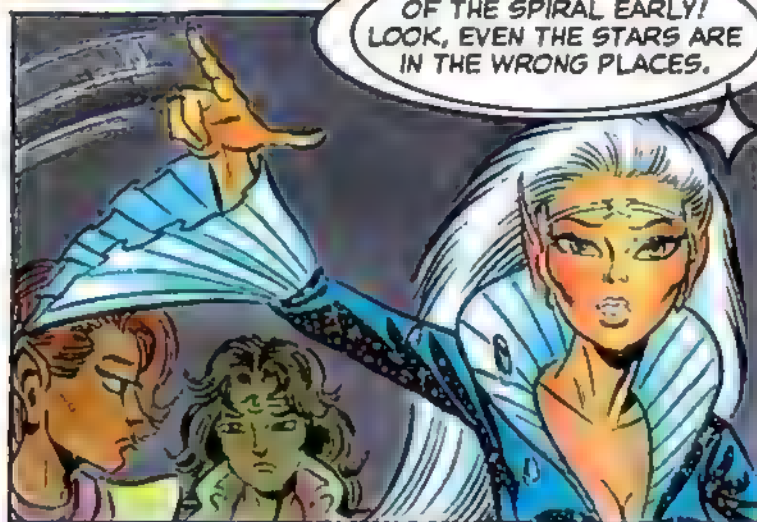


"WE TOOK OUR BROKEN
HEARTS, OUR BROKEN
BODIES... AND WE RAN."

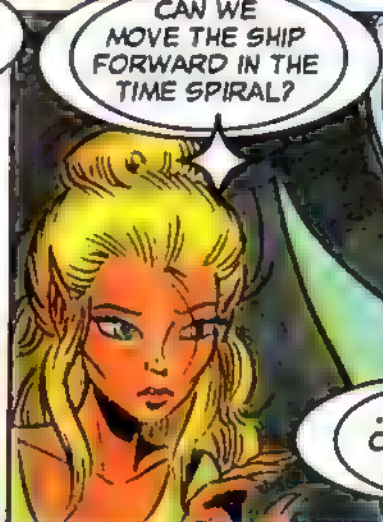


AERTH...WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

THIS IS NOT THE TIME WE MEANT TO COME TO.



A FULL TURN OF THE SPIRAL EARLY! LOOK, EVEN THE STARS ARE IN THE WRONG PLACES.

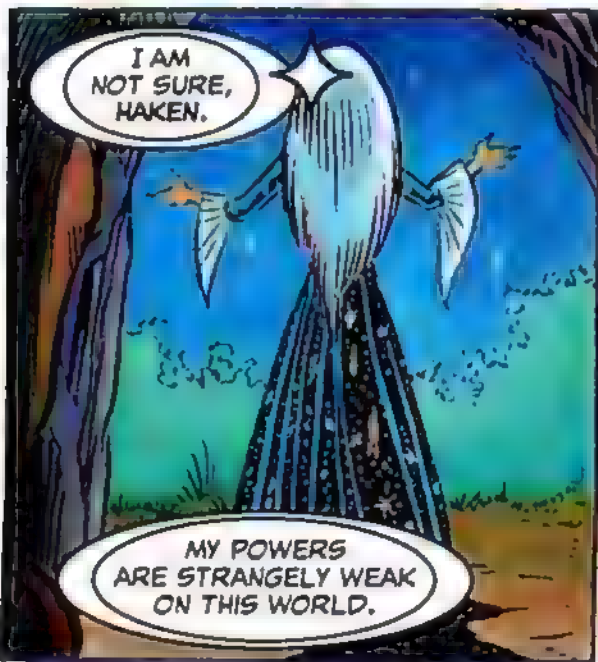


CAN WE MOVE THE SHIP FORWARD IN THE TIME SPIRAL?



WE CAN...

...IF WE CAN GET TO IT!



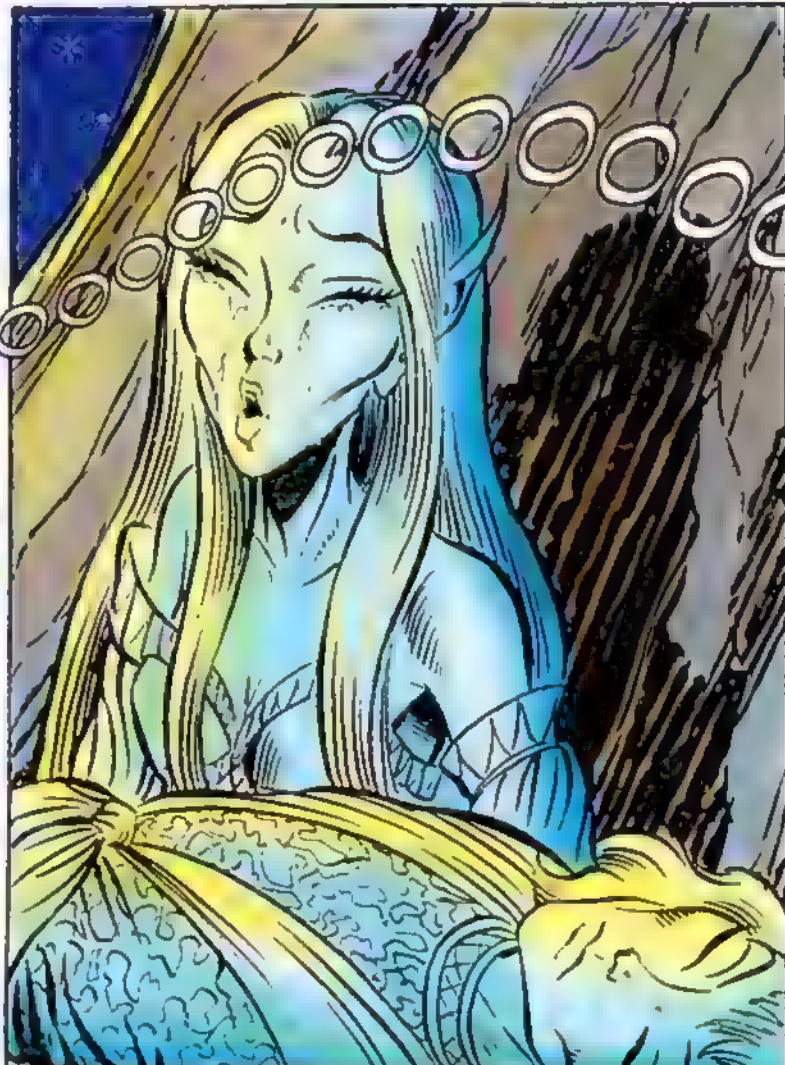
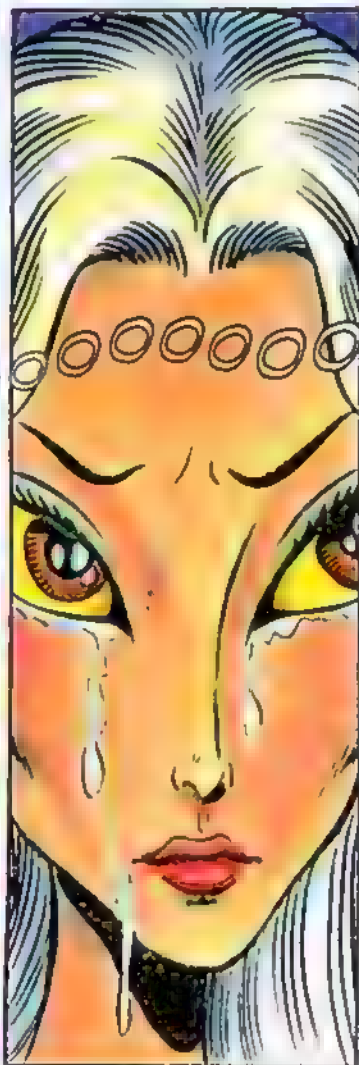
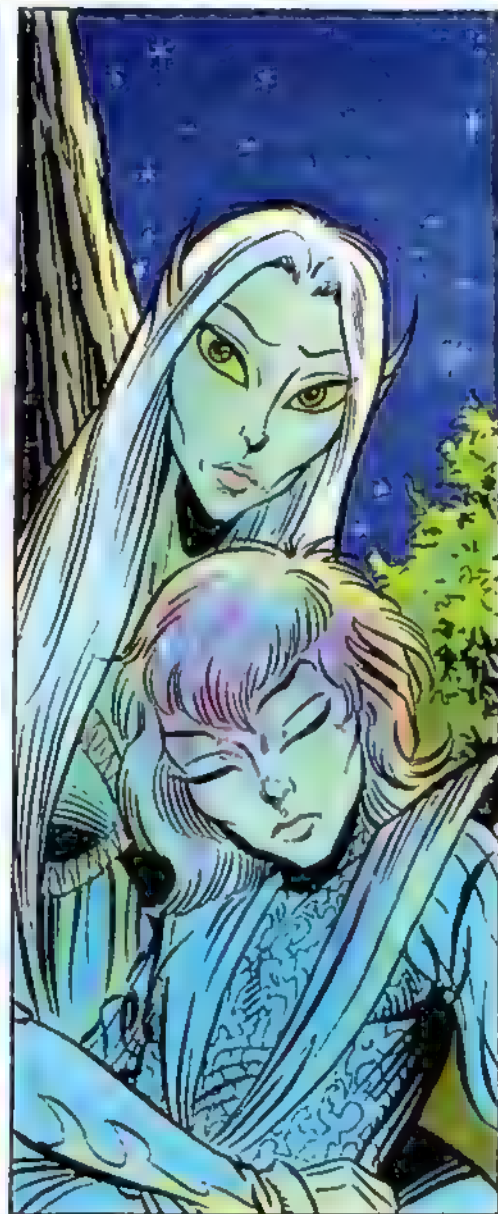
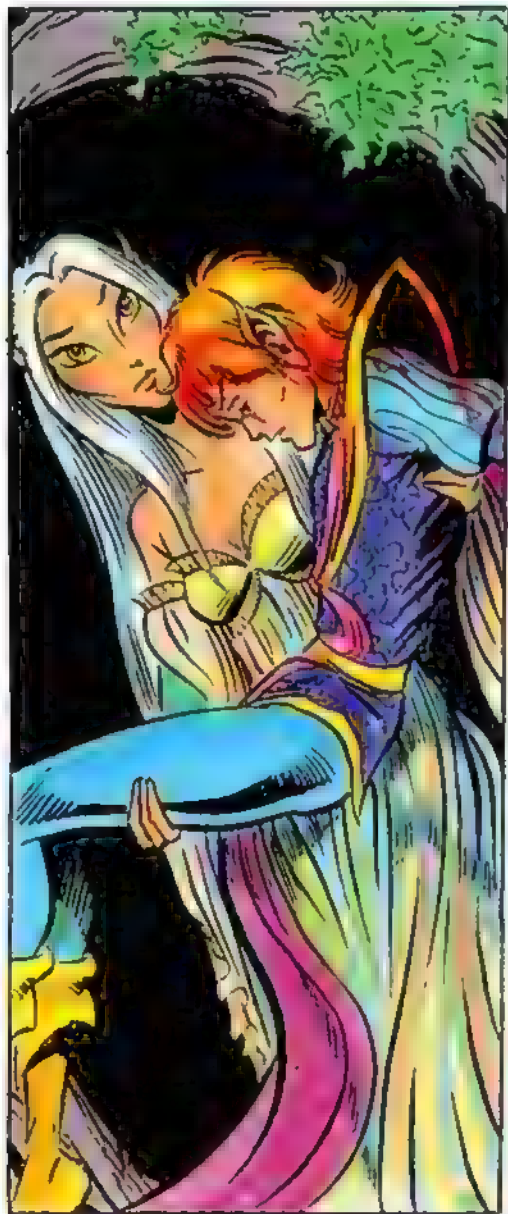
I AM NOT SURE, HAKEN.

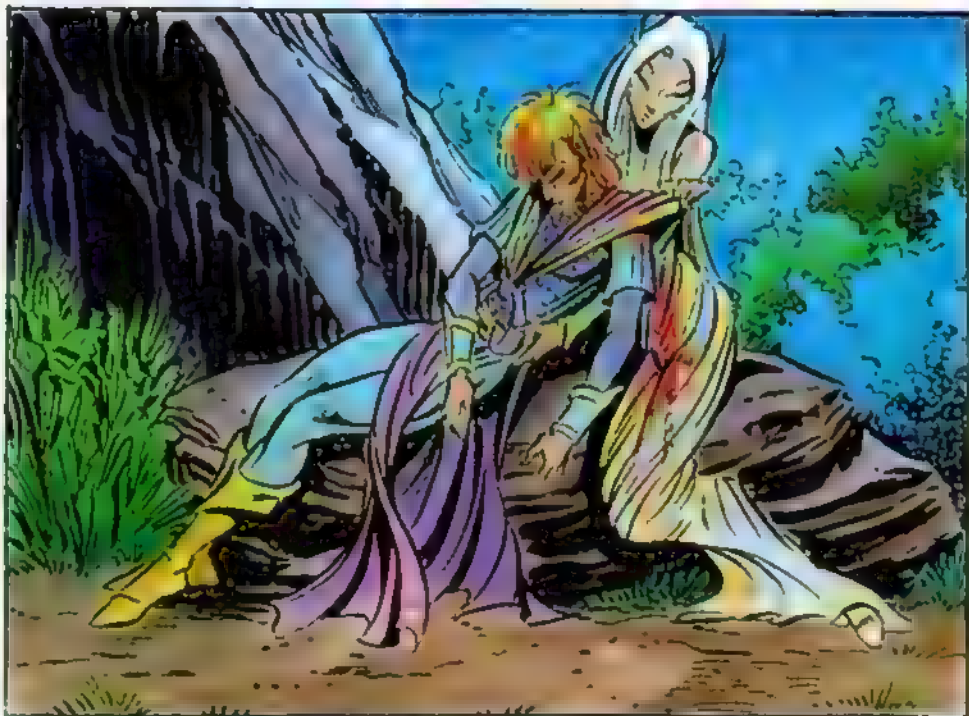
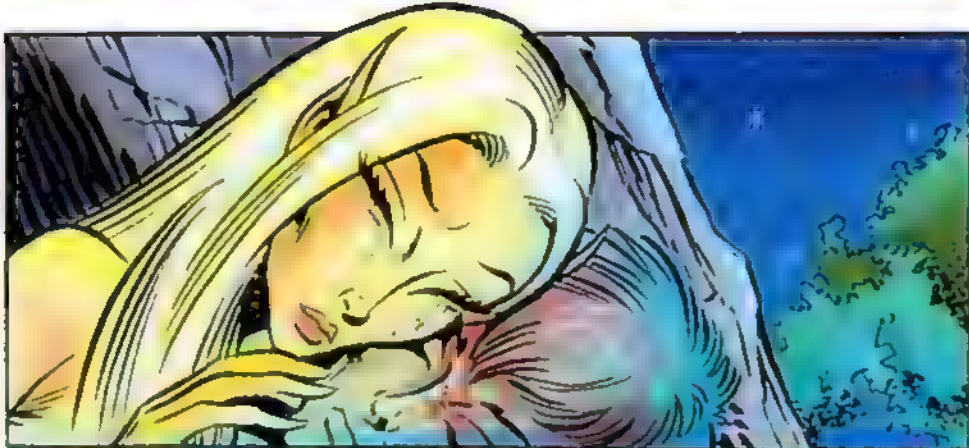
MY POWERS ARE STRANGELY WEAK ON THIS WORLD.



AS ARE MINE.

I CANNOT RESTORE HIM.



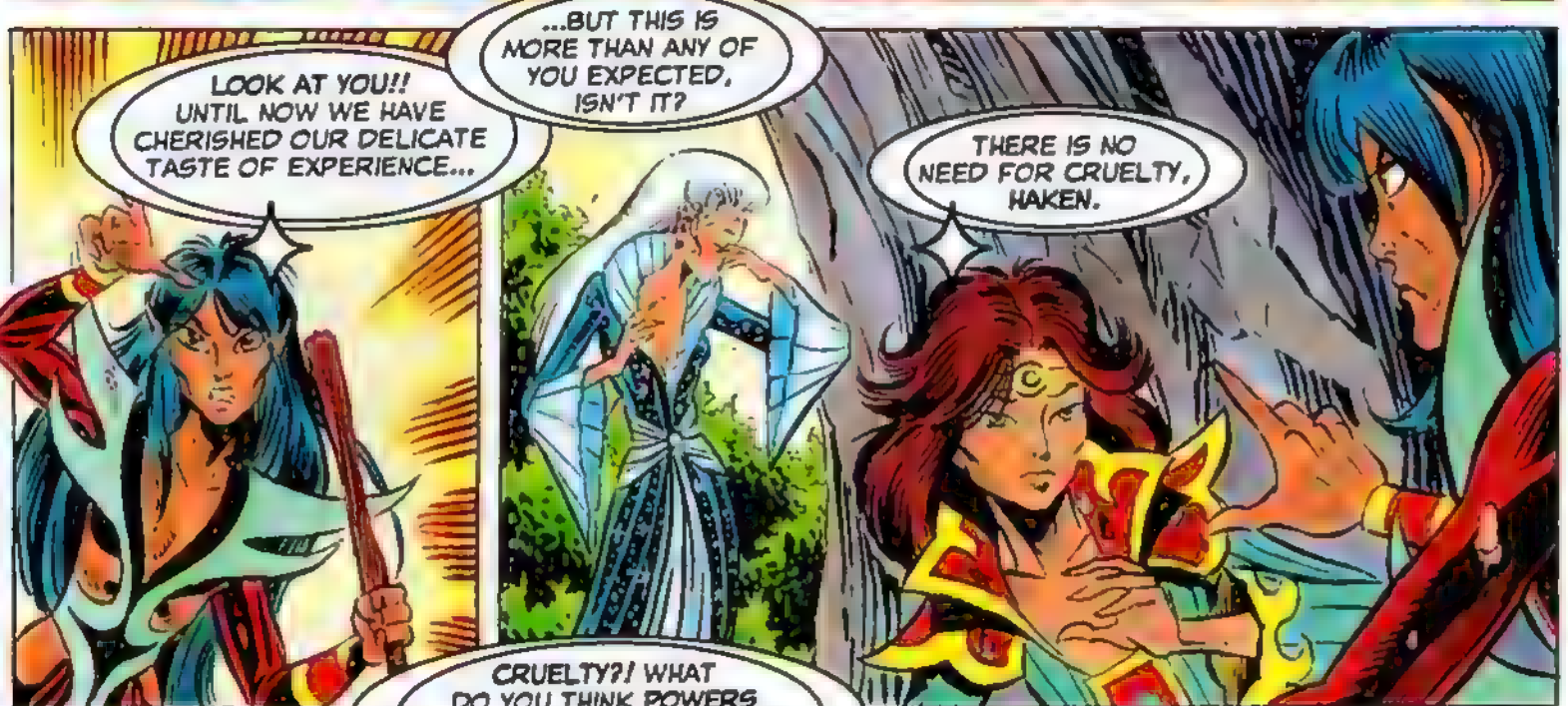




YOU JUST LET HER LEAVE!? WHAT IF SHE IS HURT OUT THERE?

NONE OF US RULES THE SPIRIT OF ANOTHER, HAKEN...WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE TO STOP HER?

I WOULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING, AT LEAST.



LOOK AT YOU!! UNTIL NOW WE HAVE CHERISHED OUR DELICATE TASTE OF EXPERIENCE...

...BUT THIS IS MORE THAN ANY OF YOU EXPECTED, ISN'T IT?

THERE IS NO NEED FOR CRUELTY, HAKEN.

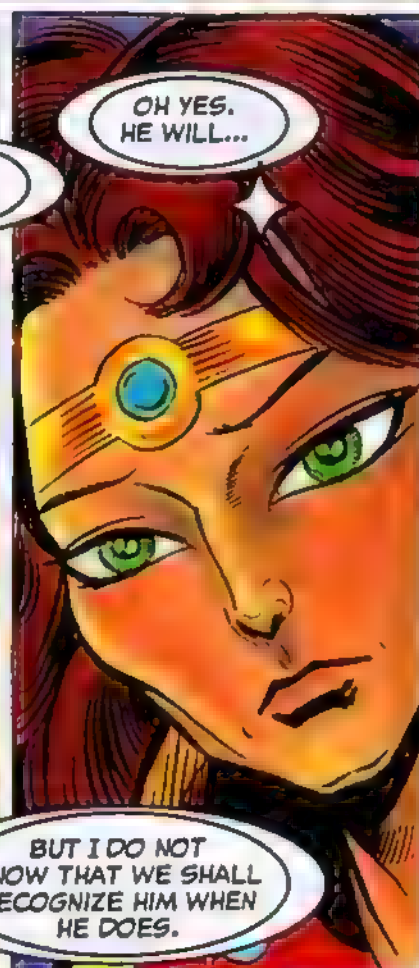


CRUELTY?! WHAT DO YOU THINK POWERS THIS NEW "PARADISE" SEFRA BROUGHT US TO?

THIS PLACE WHERE THERE IS NO MAGIC... WHERE DEATH IS DEALT AS A GREETING!

IS IT CRUEL TO SEND THE TRUTH, AERTH?

...TO TELL THE OTHERS THAT TO SURVIVE HERE WE TOO MAY HAVE TO DEAL DEATH...AND CONSUME WHAT WE KILL!





"IT WAS HARD TO CHANGE
SHAPE ON THIS NEW
WORLD...PAINFUL."

"PERHAPS SOMETHING
LIKE BIRTHING PANGS."

"IT WAS A VERY
DIM MEMORY."

"BUT ONCE
WE HAD BEEN
CREATURES
LIKE THESE."

"IF MY PEOPLE
WERE TO SURVIVE..."

"... I MUST REMEMBER
HOW TO RUN..."



"...AND EAT..."



"...AND SING!"

"THESE TINY CREATURES...
THEY LABOR AND SEARCH
AND HUNT."

"THEY FLUTTER AND
TWIRL AND HIDE."

"AND YET, AS THE
EVENING FALLS, AS
THE SUN RISES..."

"...THEY SING."

"SONGS OF JOY..."

"SONGS OF BEING."

"EVERYTHING HERE IS
SO PRECARIOUS..."

"...THAT NO THING IS
TAKEN FOR GRANTED."

"WATER IS
CELEBRATED."

"SEEDLINGS ARE
CELEBRATED."

"BREEDING IS
CELEBRATED."



"EVEN DEATH IS
CELEBRATED."

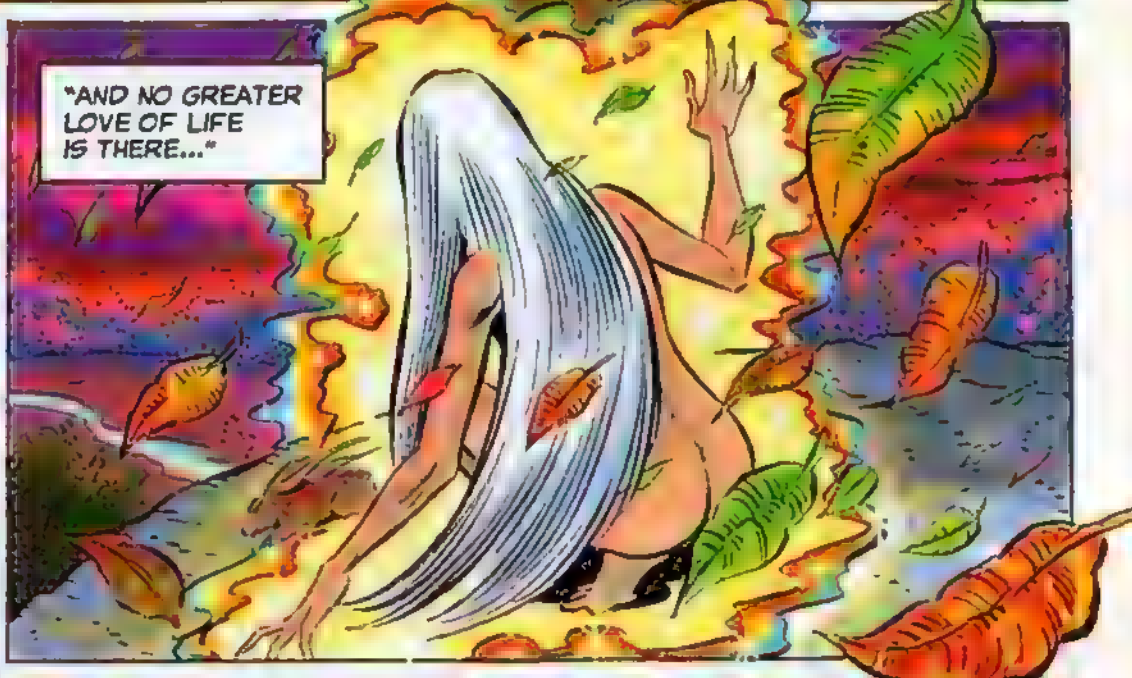
"NO THING HERE DIES,
THAT ITS PASSING
DOES NOT FEED
SOMETHING ELSE."



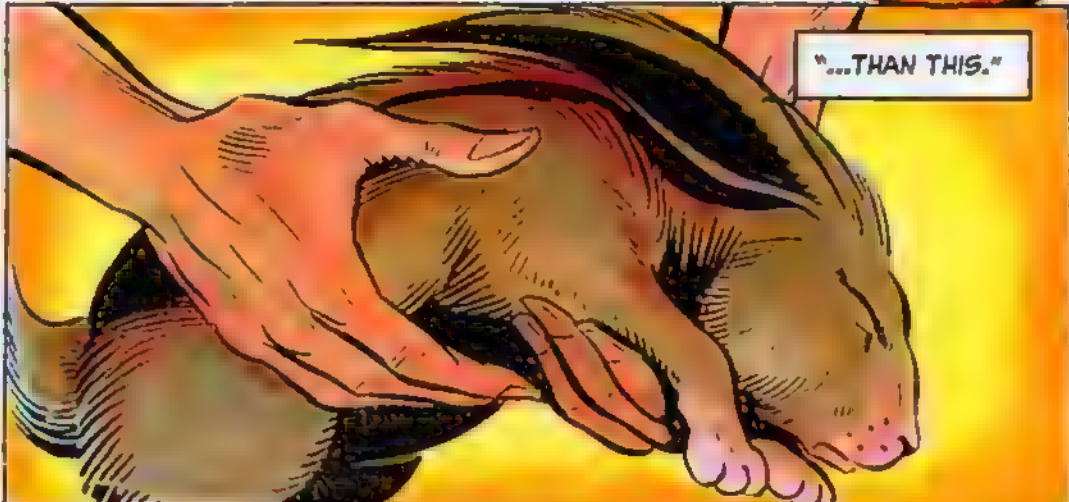
"IN THE GREAT CYCLE
OF THIS WORLD, LIFE
LAYS ITSELF DOWN TO
PRESERVE LIFE..."



"AND NO GREATER
LOVE OF LIFE
IS THERE..."



"...THAN THIS."



"...SEASON
AFTER
SEASON."



"WOULD THAT I HAD
TAKEN HAKEN WITH ME,
FOR HE WOULD HAVE
APPRECIATED MY JOURNEY."

"BUT HE HAD
LESSONS OF HIS
OWN TO LEARN..."



"LESSONS ABOUT
OVERWHELMING GRIEF..."

GUIN, GONE.

IMA, GONE.

TISLIN, GONE.
BUT WHERE?!

OUR KIND
DOES NOT DIE. WE
BUILD NEW VESSELS
TO HOUSE OUR
SPIRITS.

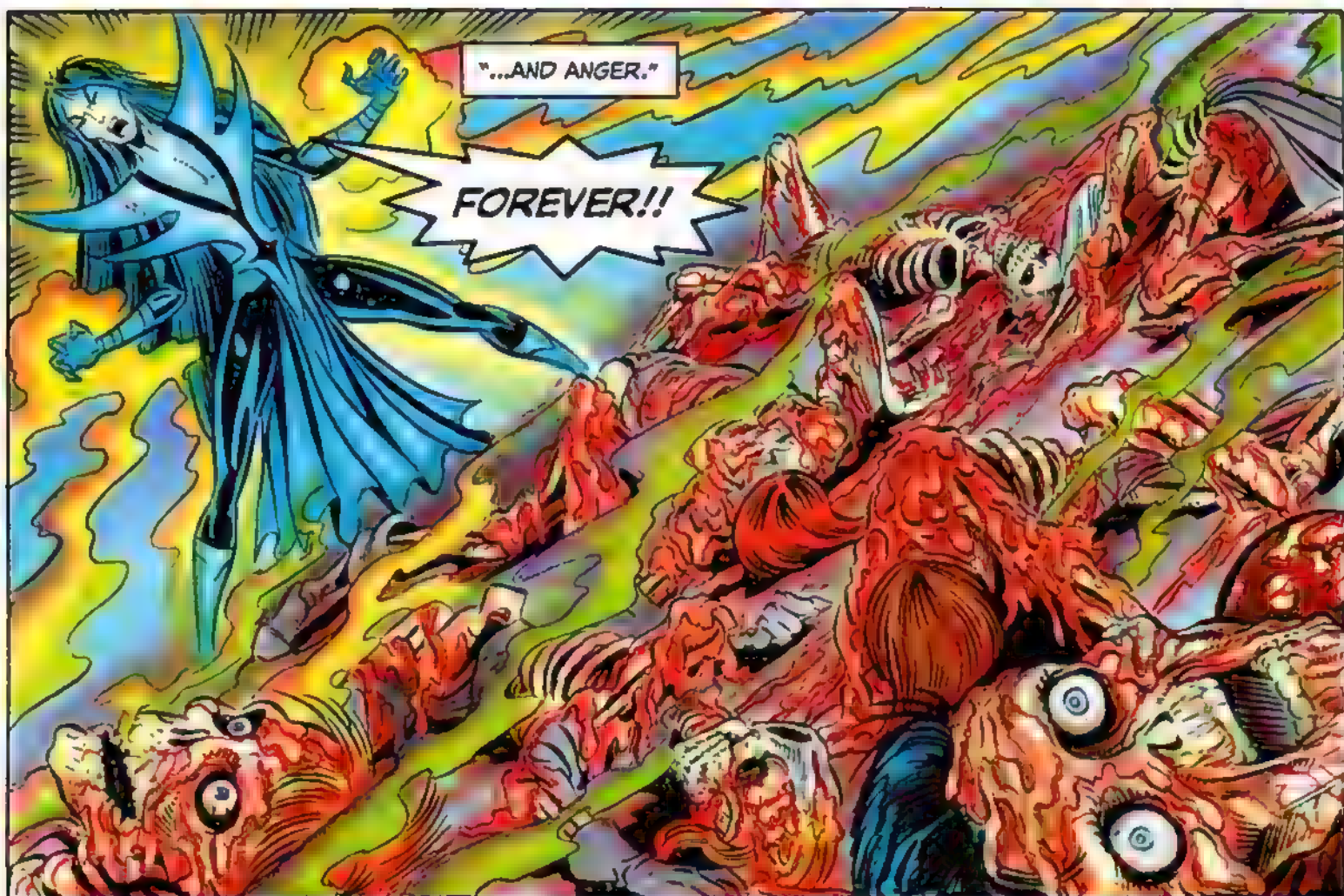
DO YOU
HEAR ME,
GUIN?!

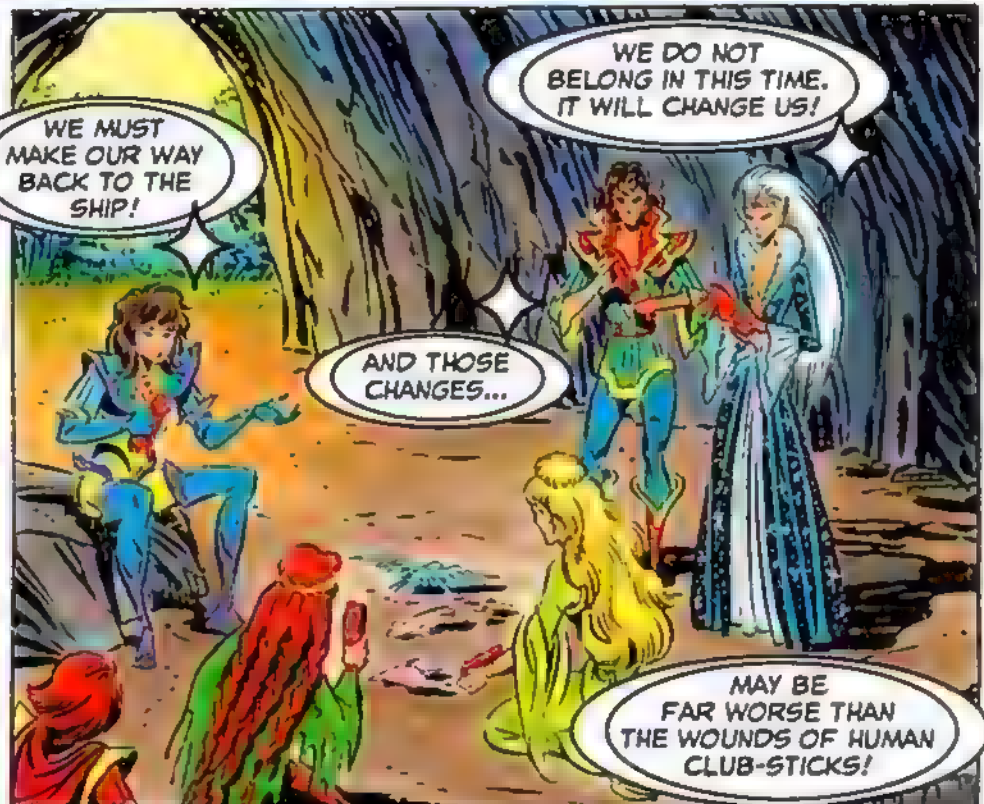
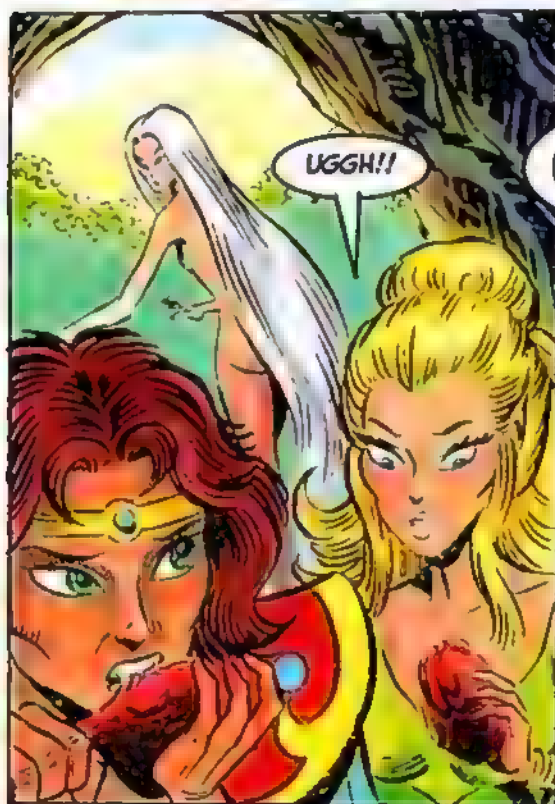
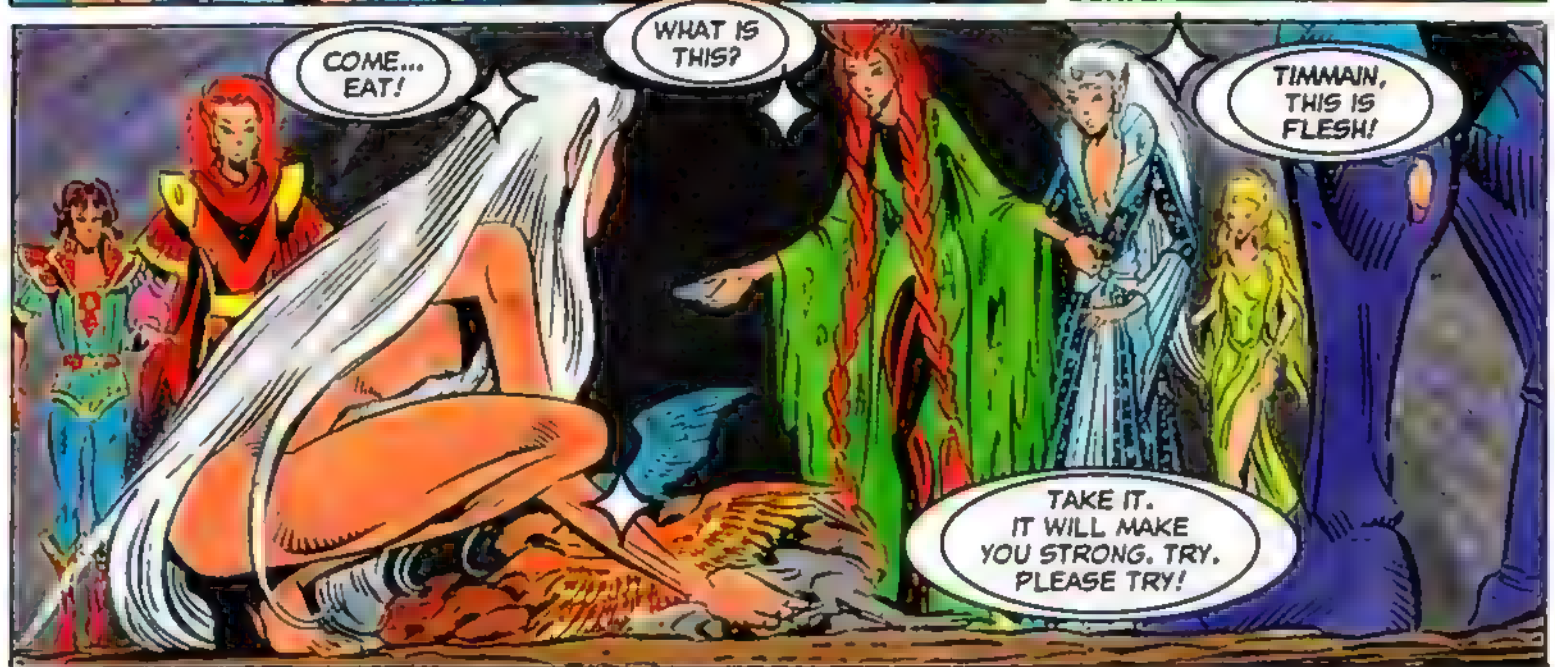
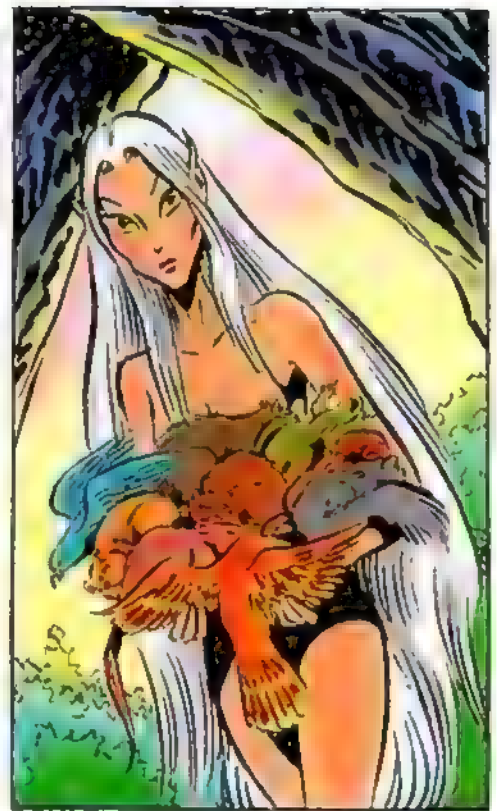
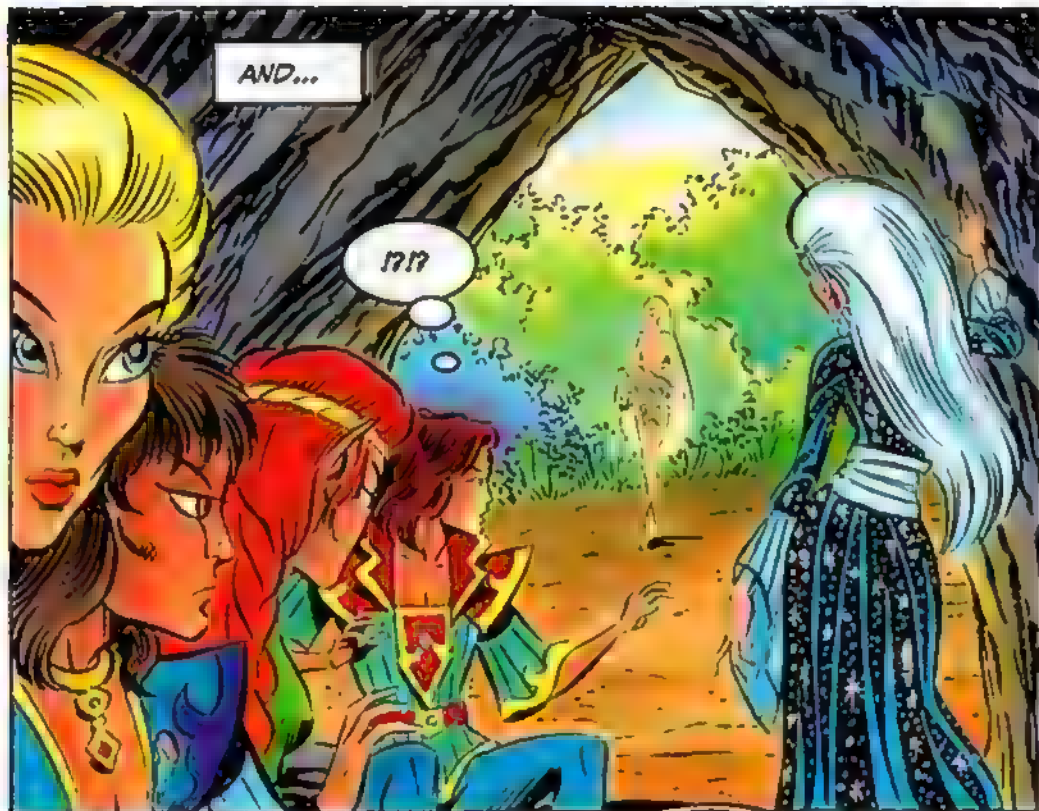
WE DO
NOT DIE!!

WE LIVE...

...FOREVER.

"LESSONS
ABOUT
FEAR..."

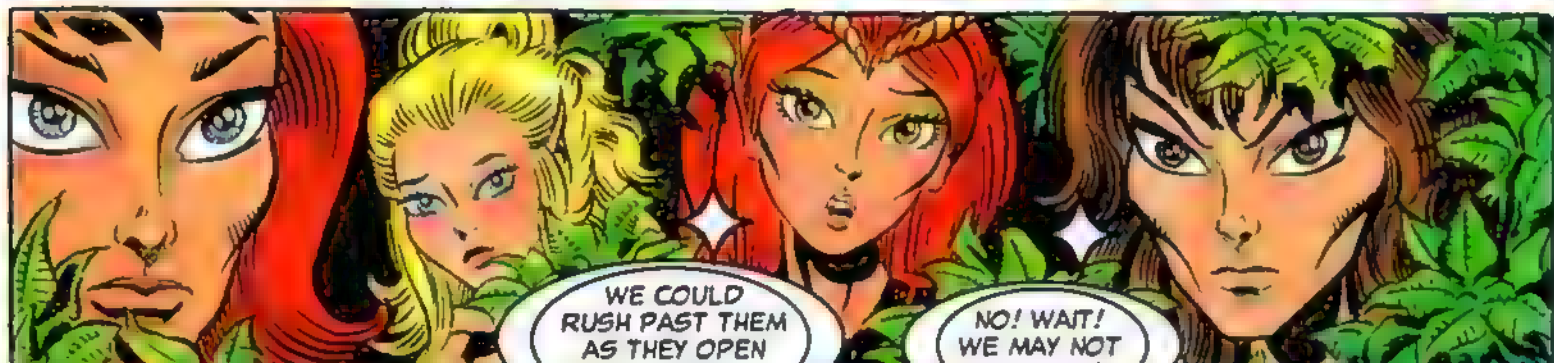




"WE MUST RETURN
OR DIE TRYING..."



"...IF WE DO NOT, WE SHALL
COMPETE WITH THE HUMANS
FOR TURNS WITHOUT END!"

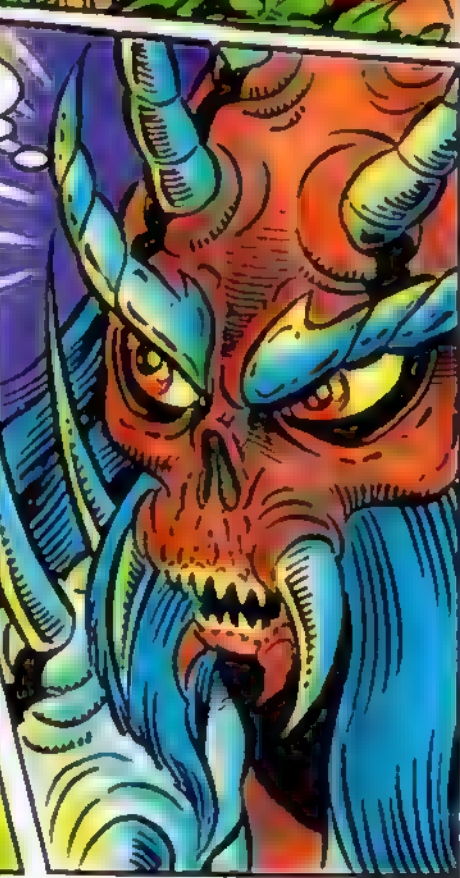
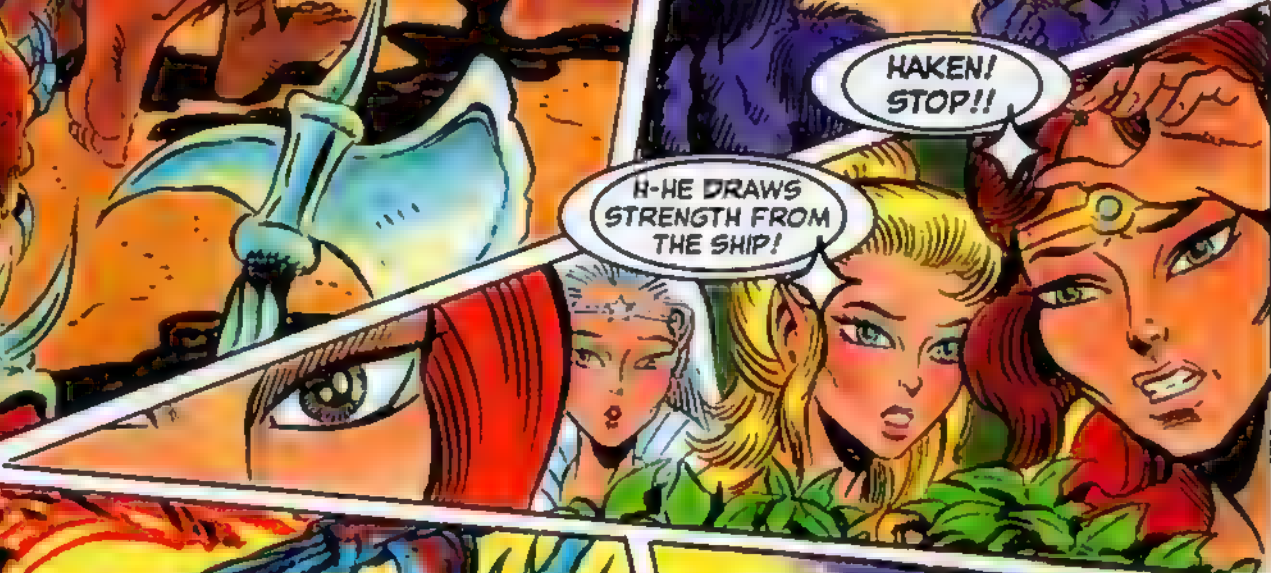
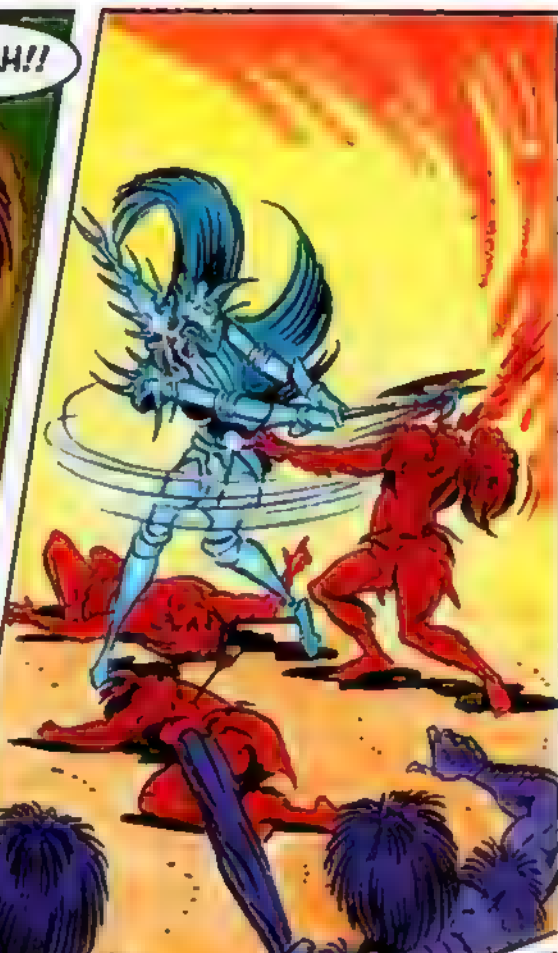


WE COULD
RUSH PAST THEM
AS THEY OPEN
THE DOORS...!

NO! WAIT!
WE MAY NOT
HAVE TO!

R-R-R-OO-
O-A-AR-R-R!!





GRRRRRAAAAAARRR!!



TO BE
CONTINUED...

Elf-Addressed

Send your letters to: "Elf-Addressed" c/o Warp Graphics,
5 Reno Road, Poughkeepsie NY 12603

The letters page, which took a brief hiatus in order to accommodate the Great Limited Edition Elfquest Print Giveaway of 1992-93, is back. I suspect, though, that most everyone was scrambling to send in coupons (we had a tremendous response to the offer) rather than writing in about the stories! Here's hoping that that gets back to what we remember as normal.

Man! This has been the longest two months! But was the wait worth it!! "HIDDEN YEARS #5" doesn't do it justice. Let's call it "Skywise's Story." I loved it! The story was so sad! Skywise's mother was so very pretty! And his father, albeit young, wasn't bad looking either. (OK, so I've never seen an ugly elf, but he's one of the better looking ones...) So that's where Skywise gets his pale skin, frosty hair, and gray-blue eyes from!

Like issues #1 to #4, the art is beautiful! From the different shades of the leaves, to the details of each elf, I loved it all. And I love their eyes! Whether Tyleet's, or Ember's, or Cutter's I love the eyes. Her eyes. Words can't describe the Eyes High looked, or how I felt when she turned to look at Shale's body on page 15. The two were Recognized, but the bond did not seem that strong yet (compared to Cutter and Leetah, or some of the elders).

Then Skywise was born. Poor baby. And naughty Skywise... 'delicious prey' indeed! If I start talking about Skywise I'll never stop. So on to the last page - it was great! The effect was there. I didn't need to see his face, that was the impact! His expression was left to our imaginations.

I read this issue, easily, ten times, admiring the evening sky, the parents-to-be, and then on page 14, the look on Shale's face (and his eyes!) right before he was killed. I don't know if I saw it right, it's 1 a.m., don't get angry, but I counted the digits a couple of times and I think Shale's got five fingers on his right hand.

Anyway, I really love the story, though I'm not sure if Skywise loves the stars because his mother does, or wanted him to, or if she wanted to bring him close to the sky because she knew he would like stars. Pondering...

It's the Wendy and Richard Pini live tour 1993 - ELFQUEST: FANTASY WITH TEETH! I wish I could be there, or if it were as easy as going to the nearest city for a convention... but way over the ocean, on a tiny island... sigh... but maybe... So you two will be traveling. Travel safe, take care, relax (don't forget that), and enjoy yourselves!

Vanessa Goh
154 Coronation Road
Singapore 1026
Rep. of Singapore

Thank you very much for the kind wishes - we've begun the tour, been to a few of the stops, and already it feels as if we've been picked up by a tornado and dropped somewhere west of Oz. As I write these words on Monday, March 8, the weekend looms - three cities in three days. As Indiana Jones said, it's not the age, it's the mileage...

By the way, now I'm absolutely certain everyone was clipping coupons - you're the only one to catch Shale's brief bout with "five-fingers disease." Wendy takes refuge in the fact that it was one o'clock in the morning here, when she drew that panel.

Zing! As we all know, this story has been waited for (and speculated about) for quite a while. And it was well worth the wait! From the way it flowed from one page to the next it's plain that Wendy enjoyed

putting this on paper!

It would seem that Demontricker lives on in those human boys (shades of "Coyote"!), but I don't think they have any idea as to what their actions will bring.

Shale's a handsome lad. I've never seen hair quite his color on a Wolfrider before. I wonder about his lineage.

Uh oh, those boys are up to (what else?) No Good.

Shale and Eyes High (a nice name, and so appropriate) are quite smitten with each other. He can hardly wait for their cub to arrive.

Oh no! Shale's been hit, and badly (possibly mortally) wounded in the fall. At least Eyes High is all right... so far.

The bottom left panel on page 12 is touching. Shale's wolf friend *knows*... and loyally waits by his elf friend's side.

Little good it does, though, there's not one ounce of compassion in those humans' eyes, or their actions. Both wolves defend their riders with their lives. When Shale and Eyes High exchanged soul names I *knew* (Shale's last moments were positively heart rending for me). The bottom three panels on page 15 made me shudder with sympathy.

Page 16... the way Rain holds Shale... I grieve for him. He has no way of knowing *his* own fate is not far into the future. The bottom panel on that page is reminiscent of another quite similar scene that, although it's fifteen years in *our* past, is not too much farther into the elves' future than the carnage that Madcoil will wreak. Redmark has no idea what the future holds for *him*, either...

A jump forward in time. Here's Skywise and Cutter as we've seen all too few glimpses of ("Memory of a Younger Time", "Out of the Woods", and a few flashbacks from the BLOOD OF TEN CHIEFS BOOKS come to mind). Skywise is already into double entendres - sigh, to be young again.

The sequences on pages 25-27 are remarkable! For Skywise to remember his mother's headband from just after his birth is indicative of some powerful imprinting. Skywise is in what could only be called a murderous rage, and yet, he lets Ehok go! Taf paid a terrible price. And page 28 - Skywise contemplating his heritage, and perhaps his destiny. How far the Wolfriders have been, and how far they have yet to go.

I thought HIDDEN YEARS #4 was Wendy's best work to date (and it was!). But "Starfall, Starrise" tops it.

Wayne Weaver
Route 1, Box 1278
Haleyville, AL 35565

For those of you who might be a bit confused by some of the references in Wayne's letter, they're to stories published in either our (current) sister ELFQUEST comic title *NEW BLOOD*, or in the four (to be five in June) volumes of *BLOOD OF TEN CHIEFS*, a series of short prose story anthologies published by Tor Books, and available in bookstores. There is ELFQUEST beyond HIDDEN YEARS! And I suppose this is a good a place as any to plug the upcoming *BLOOD OF TEN CHIEFS* comic book series. BoTC will contain adaptations of stories from the prose volumes. The first issue will be out this July, and will feature "Colors", a Timmorn Yellow-Eyes story written by yours truly and painted in spectacular fashion by Janine Johnston. There'll be more news next issue, but you don't want to miss the

I was sending in my coupons to get the print (it was hard to cut up my comics but I'm sure it will be worth it) and I thought I could take this time to comment on my love of ELFQUEST. I've been a fan for about four years. I started reading one of the graphic novels in Waldenbooks and couldn't put it down. I kept coming back to get the next in the series as soon as I had more money. After that I joined on as a permanent fan with KINGS OF THE BROKEN WHEEL. I was even more excited when HIDDEN YEARS came out in color. I have continued to enjoy all of your wonderful tales, enraptured by the skill with which the characters are drawn and their emotions are communicated.

I especially liked the story about Skywise. Not only does it remind me of the series of ELFQUEST novels, but I liked how you integrated the story of Demontricker into the plot. I was wondering whether we might see an appearance of Winnowill or Two-Edge in the near future. I enjoyed their appearance in NEW BLOOD by John Byrne. I was also wondering whether Winnowill has any plans of creating a race of sea-elves, which she is perfectly capable of doing as evidenced by her recent transformation.

I am surprised that the elves seem to believe that all the tribes of elves on the World of Two Moons have been found. There have been so many fragmentings of the Wolfriders alone in the short stories that there still must be many other tribes to be discovered. Also, the palace-ship in which the elves flew to the World of Two Moons is not the only such ship in existence. Where are all the other space-faring High Ones? I see lots of possibilities ahead, and although some readers have expressed to me that they liked the elves better when they weren't flying around in space and messing with time, I think that the quality of the ELFQUEST series has been maintained. In addition, I feel that the elves' progress is necessary and a fact of life for all beings who pass beyond the now of wolf thought. I think the futuristic look of the elves is paralleled in a way by Wendy's artificial hip. It may seem a little different and uncomfortable at first, but you come to realize that the whole runs more smoothly now and you appreciate the new freedom it allows you. Keep up the good work!

Greg Buchold
1124 Deer Run
Orefield, PA 18069

Funny you should mention sea elves... If all goes well, and we can pull, via phone, fax, and Federal Express, some diverse talents together, we should have some interesting news for you next issue. The World of Two Moons is growing, folks, in space as well as in time. It's been fifteen years in the gestation, and it's time to be born.

I totally agree with my friend when she says that HIDDEN YEARS #5 is one of the best you've done. She dislikes overly sweet stories, and this one was certainly not sweet and happy! "Starfall, Starrise" is truly an authentic tragedy, the only one you've done to date that I'm aware of. After having seen the humans grow and "mature," as it were, it is almost a shock to see their primitive brutality again, and I was hard-pressed not to cry at Slate's death. Normally it doesn't matter if I cry over ELFQUEST, but when I read it I was at the gaming store in Toronto, Games Workshop, a place 99% of the time frequented by only males, and though I have been accepted there (it was unnerving when I first started hanging out there, though) I'd rather not act like a "female." That is to say, weak and helpless. I am rather proud of my place as the store's only regular female patron.

Back to ELFQUEST. Eyes High strikes me as a silly name, (Maral, meet Wayne...you two work it out! - RP) but anyway... Ick! Those kids are so malicious. I liked the incorporation of the BoTC Demontricker, and anxiously look forward to other interpretations. The effect where Eyes High's eyes glow in the dark is really good, as is everything else, but somehow I doubt

that a baby would float, even in a waterproof cloak. Foxfur looks at times like Shenshen, too much for my taste, but she appears to have more in the way of brains than our favorite airhead. "Ooh... lovemate!" I'd like very much to know what Skywise is doing to her!

What the smeg is that creature on the next issue's cover? This is ELFQUEST, not LORDS AND DAEMONS OF CHAOS WE ALL KNOW AND LOVE! And it's by someone else! (Not that I thought you'd ever draw anything that ridiculous! A mutant human-scorpion-elephant-rhino?) I don't believe this! If it's by someone else, why not stick the cruddy thing in NEW BLOOD? That's what it's there for, isn't it? HIDDEN YEARS was supposed to be exclusively Wendy's art! What comes next, a complete takeover of ELFQUEST by incompetent fools who can't draw? Better yet, Marvel?? Arrgh!

Ahh, that feels better. I haven't had all that much to scream about since you started doing separate stories. I miss the agony and frustration and suspenseful waiting of the old series. I know I yelled and screamed and tore out my hair then, but you never fully appreciate a good thing until it's done.

Maral Agnernian
82 Mentor Blvd.
North York, Ontario
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Editorial reaction #1: Oh ye of little faith... Reaction #2: So New Blood is where "cruddy things" go?? Reaction #3: Where did Wendy ever say she wanted to be shackled to the same thing forever, and not try new things? Reaction #4: Wendy designed that cover and creature! Whaddaya say to that? Reaction #5: Here's the one for the Vegemate! But then the following letter came in, so sincere and vulnerable and intolerant, that it won out.

I'm shocked! Quitting the writing and drawing of ELFQUEST! I'm not a great fan, but quitting it! My friend is a member of the Belgian fan club and when she got the club magazine she was shocked. I read it too, and I just couldn't believe it!

Can't you just give up the merchandising and take some time off? And after a year or so go on with a refreshed series of ELFQUEST? How can you give up the series that has been a part of your lives for almost fifteen years? I don't know what the elves would say, but I think they see it as a betrayal. I pity them.

I've read issue #1 of the New Blood series. If EQ will look like that in the future it just won't be EQ any more and I think that's not acceptable to the long-time fans.

It's not that I've dedicated my life to EQ. But it must be like putting your fifteen-year-old teenager aside for gathering more money. Because if you started to hate EQ yourself, why don't you just stop the series and call the whole thing off! I mean, how can you destroy 15 years of your life and offer it to someone who may change EQ entirely?!

All the events in EQ that happened, it all seemed so real. You can't tell me that you can throw away all this, let them all change, and never regret your decision.

You have always said that the elves lived with you. Now it seems like they have to pack their things and go away. If they're willing, they can come to the Netherlands. They are welcome here.

Jolet Adriaens
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Netherlands

Dealing with totally erroneous and unwarranted assumptions, that's what turns editorial hairs gray... How can so much be extracted from one drawing and a few words of advertising? And I always thought that most 15-year-olds couldn't wait to get out of the house! OK, at least now you've actually read HIDDEN YEARS #6, done by the new team under our guidance and with our blessings. Now what do you think? - RP

A Matter of Opinion

And if they stare, just let them burn their eyes on you moving...

And if they shout, don't let it change a thing that you're doing.

Argent

You can't know... what it's like to carry a universe around in your head for fifteen years plus...a universe that entertains others, that feeds others and you...a universe you wish you could see reflected back at you through the talents of fellow professional artists and writers.

You can't know... what it's like to be both source and shepherd of what is probably the single, oddest property in a wasteland of capes, tights, bulging veins and gritted teeth.

You can't know... what it's like to dog-paddle for years in a paper sea of hopeful submissions, 99% of which must be relegated to the "almost-nearly-not quite" file.

So you can't know... how happy I am to be writing this editorial to **HIDDEN YEARS #6** in order to introduce the team of Sarah Byam, Paul Abrams, Charles Barnett and Paty Cockrum (better known professionally simply as "Paty").

Actually, I'm still pinching myself. The timing of the coming together of this talented group is pure *Twilight Zone*. In the summer of 1992, Warp Graphics let it be known that we were looking to expand - that we were on the prowl for artists and writers who were interested in tackling something a bit "different." The economy being what it was and still is, we got a lot of hungry nibbles, which we expected. What we weren't expecting was the number of professionals who came to us saying, "I grew up reading *ELFQUEST*, it was a great influence on me and I've been wanting to work with you guys for years!" It's kind of like having long-lost children you never knew existed show up on your doorstep!

Sarah Byam is a relative newcomer who started off with a bang, receiving several major comics industry award nominations in the category of best writer for her *BILLI 99* series. Currently she's scripting DC's *BLACK CANARY*. She's read *ELFQUEST* for years, but even if she hadn't, Sarah's own incredible and even heroic personal history qualifies her to take over the *HIDDEN YEARS* series and be our "it really happened" writer. She's a deep thinker, a shamaness, a healer and a warrior. She knows, elf-friends! She *knows*!

Paul Abrams worked with us back in the mid '80s, inking Debbie Hayes' short story "Courage, by Any Other Name..." for the *Warp Summer Special*. We liked his clean, clear style and his feel for fantasy. We had no idea his artwork would evolve to have the kind of grace and sensitivity the superhero-obsessed comics industry rarely has a use for. Believe it or not, straight from illustrating Marvel's testosterone-laced *NICK FURY* comes Paul, with his long blond hair and quiet (dare I say elfin?) manner, to bring you his love of the woods, his classically-influenced drawing style and his willingness to try the odd and the challenging.

Now Charles...Let's just say **Charles Barnett** and **Paul Abrams** come as a set - an unmatched, complementary pair of bookends. They're a team to the point of finishing each others' sentences. But where Paul is gentle and reserved, Charles is passionate, even explosive. He's an "old school" Joe Sinnott-type inker absolutely committed to clarity and consistency. And does he ever know *ELFQUEST*! We're thinking of making him our pitchman on The Shopping Channel. You should hear him retell our stories, in his own inimitable way, to potential new readers at conventions! He truly cares about the characters with a passion.

It's almost impossible to introduce you to **Paty** in just a few sentences. She's one of the few women who have endured in this industry and she's earned the respect of many for her spectacular color sense as well as her professionalism. We're especially fortunate to have her on board because she's been following *ELFQUEST* from the beginning and can tell us things about our characters that even *wedon't* know. When I ask her for iridescence or to use a monochromatic color scheme to set a mood, I know I'm going to get even more than I envision. This woman knows her stuff! But then, since her house is a veritable zoo, all the colors of nature are there to inspire her.

Paty, Paul and Charles are all neighbors of ours here in the Hudson Valley, and Sarah and I are connected almost intravenously by fax. Trust me when I say I'm all over them like hair on a gorilla. This is the official *ELFQUEST* they're undertaking, and they know it. Being story editor/art director after so many years of being artist/writer is like moving to another planet. The view is very different. But this team makes it easy for me - they're brilliant, brave and they care. Creators of cult hits are hard acts to follow. Would you want to tackle this job? *Could* you? Then welcome these new members of the pack with a howl! *Ayoooooah!!*

Wendy Pini

•**COMING IN MAY!** The magic-infused conclusion to "How Shall I Keep From Singing." Hints and allegations of what the second half of 1993 has to offer you - including centerfolds, chief-tens, and a bit of "under da sea"! The Warp Graphics "ABCD Awards" (what could *they* be?). **PLUS** - more of your frantic feedback on the new *ELFQUEST* team! (Note, however, that letters complaining "it ain't Wendy" will be word-processed with a Vegematic!) See you in 60!

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Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE